



Design Guidelines Task Force Meeting Notes

July 6, 2021

Executive Director Sharon McCormick called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and welcomed attendees, being: Ed Starr, and Mylene Vincent, both of SHS Consulting, Stacy Manning, Garth Armour, Lyn Logan, Jim Torrance, Steve Diamond, Kim Harris, Melri Wright, Tovah Socha, and Barry Tatchell. Regrets were sent by Anne-Marie Shaw, Steve Simon, and Shawn Everitt.

Sharon introduced Ed Starr and Mylene Vincent of SHS Consulting, who are providing Development Management services for The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation. The Task Force members briefly introduced themselves for the benefit of Ed and Mylene.

Sharon reviewed with the Task Force: design guideline process, review and discussion of feedback, other gateway site initiatives, and next steps. Sharon confirmed that the Design Guidelines, once approved by the Board, will be incorporated into the conceptual site plan, the planning amendment application, and the Request for Proposal for design proposal submission.

With respect to feedback for the Design Guidelines, consensus was reached in the following areas:

- Non Residential Design space: remove retail use in non-residential space, find sustainable choices in material selection for paving and walkways, and explore rainwater collection and native plant landscaping;
- Accessibility: follow standards to meet CMHC requirements, and consider surface height adjustability to provide flexibility; and
- Public Space Design: adequate storage facilities, street/community connectivity, play area/gathering space needs, green roof consideration.

Areas for discussion include: roof design and slope (flat and pitched), façade (1 to 2 breaks to reduce perceived massing and consistent façade on east and west frontage), and setbacks (additional setbacks may be useful for landscaping in front, seek creative ways to minimize perception of mass and articulation of building, and outdoor amenity space, parking and buffer of trees at the back are necessary).

Regarding roof design and slope, the Task Force discussed the green roof opportunities available for a flat roof, but Steve Diamond also noted that the most important point is the setback between the 3rd and 4th storeys and break up the façade, rather than being prescriptive about flat versus pitched roof, which could be detailed by the design architect. Further, the setback from the street must be mindful to assist with minimizing the profile of the building as well as ensuring there is room on the site for an outdoor gathering space, play area, parking

and buffer of trees at rear of site. Regarding façade, the Task Force discussed ensuring that the façade was broken up along the building frontage to King St without specifying distances, with consistency in the façade on the east and west frontages.

Regarding Guiding Principles, 75% of task force respondents agreed they adequately communicate the vision. Most respondents agree that modern style that fits with the Cidery and Town Hall are examples of the desired style, while one respondent suggested a traditional style (regency, Georgian, Italianate, and early Ontario) might be more appropriate. Steve Diamond noted that wording in the Design Guidelines could state that the design of the building should mirror the existing character of the Town. The Task Force agreed that providing the architect with a level of freedom when it comes to design is best, understanding that it must fit with the context of the Town. It was agreed that this is clear in wording of the guidelines being adopted. Kim Harris noted that a mock traditional style will not reflect the traditional character of a building that was actually built 100 or more years ago. Kim noted her primary concern is ensuring the design is sustainable. Lyn noted the need to ensure the ultimate design of the building should not reflect an institutional appearance. Mylene noted that the Gateway Site allows for a “blank slate” opportunity and noted that green/sustainable building can still exist within a traditional style, if that is the style that is ultimately decided on. Garth Armour noted this Gateway Site is an opportunity to raise the bar with regard to design excellence and creating a “landmark building”. Wording to that effect should be included in the Design Guidelines. The Task Force amended Principle 5 to include that “Building massing, orientation and detailed design should respond to the development’s prominent Gateway location, establishing an aesthetically pleasing entryway into the Thornbury downtown community that reflects, is compatible with and improves upon the Town’s built form”. The Task Force amended Principle 7 to include “Physically define the street by locating taller buildings farther from the edge of the street and minimizing the height impact through a combination of built form, setbacks, and landscaping. Buildings may be oriented parallel to both streets’ right-of-way, to animate the streets, provide a visual entrance to Thornbury and strengthen the pedestrian feel”.

Sustainability for the building is a crucial component with key identified design elements by the Task Force which include: green roof, electric vehicle charging stations, car share, transit layby, bicycle storage, rainwater management and water harvesting, native plants as appropriate, and dark sky compliant lighting. Kim Harris noted that interior design and appliance features should be considered in the context of sustainability as well and encourage exploring options to stop burning fuels such as natural gas. Wording to the affect of “exploring omission of no natural gas connections” will be included. Garth Armour suggested requesting a cost benefit analysis from proponents submitting designs. He also noted that as a landscape architect, native plants should be used “where appropriate” as some plantings require additional care when not in their natural environment. This will be included in the Design Guidelines. Barry Tachell noted that long term considerations for the cost of retrofitting at a later time needs to be considered with trade off for sustainability. Lyn Logn requested that solar be given consideration. Jim

Torrance stated caution that the project needs to remain affordable. The proposed Guideline change was acceptable to meet all these considerations. Mylene noted that sometimes the energy efficient solutions can also be the cost-efficient solutions. Mylene provided an overview of sustainability through the lens and requirements of CMHC and noted the proposed design guideline, being: “provide sustainability design elements desired with requirement to evaluate the environmental and economic benefits and cost providing rationale for any elements that are not being utilized”. This was acceptable to Task Force. Inclusion of consideration of not having a natural gas supply to the property, super insulated building envelope and windows, etc. should also be added. Mylene noted that the concept plan will include a preliminary energy model.

The Task Force reviewed interior design guidelines with consideration for unit sizes, look and feel, and amenities. Steve Diamond requested that the size of the 3 bedroom units be reviewed with market benchmarks. This will be done by BMAHC. Stacy noted that a key component for a family is for storage requirements for people living in the building. The Task Force were in support of secure storage that could be an additional charge to tenants as well as insuite storage to accommodate larger items such as strollers, bikes. This component will be incorporated in the guidelines and preliminary project budget. Other interior features supported by the Task Force were common laundry room, multipurpose community room, secure bike lock up.

Additional Gateway Site initiatives include a potential for public art features as an added visual enhancement. A student from University of Guelph has approached the Corporation about conducting a case study with respect to naturalizing and restoring landscape. The case study would create a site plan that includes site selection, soil preparation, plant selection and maintenance to inform landscape naturalization. There will also be a focus on opportunities for restoring previously used land, such as the King Street site, and ideas for how to bring it back to a living ecosystem in tandem with the new human use to which it is being targeted. The concept will be presented at the August Board meeting for Board review and consideration.

Next Steps

- Revised Draft Guidelines to Board for approval at August Board meeting. Document will be circulated to the Task Force at that time.
- Prepare concept site plan incorporating the Approved Guidelines
- Planning amendment application to embed Key Design Principles in Site Official Plan and the full Approved Guidelines in the application
- Approved Guidelines provided in RFP for Design Builder proposal submissions. The RFP evaluation process will include a community evaluation component for the public to have input on the design submission selection.

Sharon confirmed that, at the time the planning amendment process starts, there will be more community engagement opportunities available. This will include public events to present the Gateway business plan and feasibility study with conceptual site plan, high level financial information, identify the need for attainable housing, among other key components. The RFP for the Design Builder will be released at the point at which the planning amendment is finalized.

Members of the Task Force thanked Sharon for her efforts to date, and wished her the best in her future endeavors. Sharon echoed her thanks back to members of the Task Force for their collaborative approach and for contributing to the discussion around the Gateway Site. It was noted that this is likely the final meeting of the Task Force.